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Bakersfield

Mr. Lester Snow
Executive Director
CALFED/BAY-DELTA PROGRAM
1416 Ninth St., Suite 1155
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Snow:

As I read over the ten CALFED alternatives, I became concerned about some common elements which could have important implications for the San Joaquin Valley and Kern County.

Current cost estimates for these alternatives range from \$3 billion to \$12 billion. Less costly alternatives rely more heavily on demand management and re-operation of existing facilities. Does this assume that demand management will be paid for by water users? What about annual O&M costs for demand management features? If facilities are re-operated to benefit fish and wildlife, who will pay for the re-operation costs?

I support a "pay for what you get" financing philosophy, and beneficiaries should pay in proportion to their benefits. For the export water users, Delta water is a commodity that is sold to end users, who use it to generate revenues with which to pay for the water supply and also fuel the huge California economy. If the water user's water supply isn't increased, then the costs are unfairly loaded onto their backs.

Also, the federal government has a responsibility to provide significant funding for CALFED's program. Every effort should be made to secure significant federal funding for implementation of CALFED's program.

Every alternative promises to increase water for the environment, either through construction of storage dedicated to the environment or reducing Delta exports. No alternative proposes to increase water supplies for water users. This does not meet the needs of the water users and is downright offensive.

Some options may increase water supplies (i.e. East Side Conveyance), however, printed descriptions only discuss "increasing water supply reliability and flexibility" or "improving water quality." This leaves the reader with the impression that no increases in water supply will result.

In most alternatives, water supply "reliability" would be achieved by reducing or altering Delta pumping, which can only result in reducing, or at best sustaining current levels, water supplies to the export water users. Demand management and other features would be used to make our supplies "reliable" or "sustained". Put another way, "if you could learn to get by with less water, then what was left would be more reliable." This does not meet the needs of the water users.

The southern San Joaquin Valley continues to suffer from ground water overdraft. With CALFED's current emphasis on "sustaining" export water supplies, nothing has been done to address this overdraft except take agricultural land out of production. This would result in redirected impacts, which violates one of CALFED's stated objectives.

A foremost priority for CALFED's program must be the resolution of water supply problems caused by threatened and endangered species, with the most favorable outcome being establishing conditions whereby the listed species could be delisted. A major problem that gave rise to the CALFED program has been the conflict between operating the export projects and fish listed as threatened or endangered, particularly the impacts of so-called "take limits." Recognizing that implementation of CALFED's program will be staged, the selected program should allow continued operation of the export projects at their present levels, with the expectation that, over time, improved ecological conditions will permit an increase in water exports. I agree with the Stakeholders recommendation to "create Delta conditions so that water users can employ the full range of management options to meet current and future reasonable needs, including the ability to export water in excess of that necessary to meet water quality objectives protecting all beneficial uses."

Every alternative features expanded levels of demand management, including conservation, conjunctive use, ground water and surface water banking. A stated goal of demand management is to "sustain supplies for existing water users and provide alternative supplies for other users." If demand management is imposed on water users, then the "other users" must be the environment. Indeed, the water "saved" by demand management is to be used to provide Delta flows and improve system operational flexibility to reduce fish entrainment.

In export areas, Delta water supplies are supplemental to other local supplies, and in the southern San Joaquin Valley there is a persistent ground water overdraft. Therefore conservation will not reduce demands for Delta water supplies. Also, how can reducing demands "sustain water supplies for existing water users?"

In recent years water suppliers throughout the state have made strong commitments to most of the demand management strategies suggested by CALFED. Water conservation, reclamation and pricing incentives are being used by both urban and agricultural water suppliers. The success of these actions are documented in numerous reports filed with the California Urban Water Conservation Council USBR, Association of California Water Agencies and others. These demand management programs are being carried out at the expense of the water suppliers. The CALFED program has no right to claim demand management savings, bought and paid for by water suppliers and users, and credit

them to reduction of Delta export amounts.

I understand the desire of CALFED to incorporate some level of demand management into its alternatives. However, we want to make it abundantly clear that we will not accept mandated demand management as part of any CALFED program. Several local agencies have been working with DWR's AB 3616 Advisory Committee to develop an agricultural water conservation program and we are willing to discuss the appropriate role of this body of work in CALFED's program. But we should not forget that export water users have already agreed to reduce their diversions from the Delta as part of the Bay-Delta Accord by 300,000 acre-feet annually, and up to 1,000,000 acre-feet during critical years. It is inappropriate to expect further reductions in Delta exports on the part of these water users.

As part of demand management (and also water quality management), every alternative but one targets from 200,000 to 800,000 agricultural acres for retirement. Every alternative targets about 70,000 acres in Westlands WD with drainage problems for retirement. This means that a substantial acreage of San Joaquin Valley farmland is targeted for retirement as part of every alternative. I want to state in the strongest terms that we will oppose any efforts to take land out of production as a method of reducing demands for Delta water.

Every alternative features expanded levels of conjunctive use and banking to provide spring Delta flows. Much of the conjunctive use and banking is proposed to occur in lieu. This assumption contains some serious flaws.

In the southern San Joaquin Valley, Delta water supplies are supplemental to other local supplies. Surface distribution facilities were sized and constructed considering the availability of surface water and peak season needs. This feature assumes that distribution facilities are sufficiently sized to deliver increased quantities of surface water. Expanding conjunctive use to provide spring Delta flows may require expanding surface distribution facilities and also well extraction capabilities.

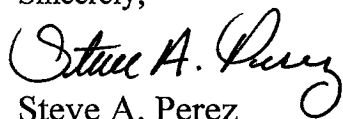
Every alternative includes moderate to extensive habitat restoration actions. Specific actions include increasing shallow tidal habitat, restoring and increasing riverine and riparian habitats. Could these habitat restoration actions result in an increased need for Delta outflow to the detriment of export water users?

CUWA/AG and Water Users from the Northern California Water Agency and San Joaquin Tributary Water Users are developing a negotiated settlement of obligations to meet outflow requirements of the 1995 water Quality Control Plan. CALFED's program must respect the results of those negotiated settlements.

CALFED's program should not restrict or reduce the Kern County Water Agency's share of Delta pumping capacity. The Agency has invested considerable resources to expand its ground water programs in order to take advantage of such high flows. Their success is dependent upon receiving

maximum amounts of water during high-flow periods (i.e. Interruptible waterO for recharge, both for abnking and overdraft correction). Any CALFED program which restricts the Agency's access to such high-flow water is unacceptable.

Sincerely,



Steve A. Perez
Second District Supervisor
County of Kern